

REMARKS

The Examiner has rejected claims 1 through 5, 7 through 10, 12, 13, 15, 16, 18, 19, 21 through 24, 26, 27, 29 through 37, 39, 40 and 42 through 47 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a). In view of the above amendments and the following remarks, the Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner to reconsider the withdrawal of the currently pending rejections.

The Section 103(a) Rejections

The Examiner has rejected claims 1 through 5, 7 through 10, 12, 15, 16, 18, 19, 21 through 24, 26, 29 through 37, 39 and 42 through 44 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly being obvious over Ueta et al. in view of Goto. The Examiner has also rejected claims 13, 27, 40 and 45 through 47 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Ueta et al. and Goto in view of Kawamura et al.

Newly amended independent claims 1 and 29 now both explicitly recite “inputting a user input value including a processing mode.” Similarly, newly amended independent claim 15 now explicitly recites “an operation for inputting a user input value including a processing mode.” In other words, the current invention as explicitly recited in newly amended independent claims 1, 15 and 29 calls for the “processing mode” to be inputted in the “user input value.” Furthermore, the current invention selects the “a correction coefficient” according to “a combination of the “threshold values,” the “outline characteristics” and the “user input value(s).” Among other things, the support for the above claim amendments is found in the original disclosure at lines 13 through 15 on page 7 of the current application.

In view of the above clarified subject matter limitations, the Ueta et al. reference fails to disclose, teach or suggest the user input of “a processing mode.” Prior to selecting a certain correction coefficient value, the system of the Ueta et al. reference allows the user to input a user-selected comparison coefficient value T0 and a user-selected contrast coefficient K. (lines 44 through 48, column 3). Initially, the values a, b, and d from the three consecutive CCDs are

calculated to generate $P=2b-(a+c)$, and the absolute value of P is compared to the user-selected comparison coefficient value T0. If $P < |T0|$, then no edge contrast is performed. On the other hand, If $P =$ or $> |T0|$, then edge contrast is performed. In both cases, the T0 value is fixed. There is no disclosure or suggestion on the user input other than the “T0” and “K,” and neither of them remotely suggests “a processing mode” as explicitly recited by the newly amended independent claims.

By the same token, the Goto reference also fails to disclose, teach or suggest the user input of “a processing mode.” The Goto reference discloses a user input method of choosing threshold values to optimize a display of a certain tissue structure of interest such as brain in an image generated by an apparatus such as an X-ray CT scanner. Among other things, as disclosed at lines 24 through 32 in column 3, the Goto reference requires an operator to adjust the threshold values as he or she is actually observing a portion of the image. There is no disclosure or suggestion on the user input other than the threshold values, and the Goto reference remotely suggests “a processing mode” as explicitly recited by the newly amended independent claims.

As discussed above, newly amended independent claims 1, 15 and 29 now each explicitly recite “a processing mode” with respect the inputted image data. Neither the Ueta et al. reference nor the Goto reference discloses, teaches or suggests the patentable features of the newly amended independent claims.

Furthermore, there are other patentable distinctions in the pending subject matter limitations of the independent claims. The Examiner has pointed out on page 4 in the Office Action that the Ueta et al. reference discloses “a set of predetermined correction coefficients” at lines 2 through 4 in column 4. However, it appears that the Ueta et al. reference discloses only a single user-input contrast coefficient K1 and no selection of a desired one from a plurality of “predetermined correction coefficients” as called for by the independent claims. Although the Ueta et al. reference discloses the comparison coefficient T0 as a threshold value, this is not one

of the “predetermined correction coefficients” since it is used to compared to a signal but it is not used to correct the signal as called for by the independent claims.

For these reason, even if the cited references are combined, the combined disclosures still fail to disclose, teach or suggest the above discussed patentable features of the current invention as explicitly recited in newly amended independent claims 1, 15 and 29. Thus, it would not have been obvious to one of ordinary in the art to provide the above discussed patentable feature of the current invention as explicitly recited in the newly amended independent claims based upon the cited prior art.

Lastly, the Examiner has also rejected claims 13, 27, 40 and 45 through 47 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Ueta et al. and Goto in view of Kawamura et al. The Examiner has indicated with respect to FIGURE 1 that the Kawamura et al. reference discloses the spatial arrangements of the edges. The Kawamura et al. reference also fails to disclose, teach or suggest the user input of “a processing mode” as explicitly recited by the newly amended independent claims.

In view of the above, dependent claims are also patentably distinct. Dependent claims 2 through 5, 7 through 10, 12, 13, 16 through 19, 21 through 24, 26, 27, 30 through 37, 39, 40 and 42 through 47 ultimately depend from one of newly amended independent claims 1, 15 and 29 and incorporate the patentable features of the newly amended independent claims. Thus it would not have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to provide the patentable features of the independent claims based upon the cited references alone or in combination. Therefore, the Applicant respectfully submit to the Examiner that the rejection of claims 1 through 5, 7 through 13, 15 through 19, 21 through 27, 29 through 40 and 42 through 44 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) should be withdrawn.

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Conclusion

In view of the above amendments and the foregoing remarks, Applicant respectfully submits that all of the pending claims are in condition for allowance and respectfully request a favorable Office Action so indicating.

Respectfully submitted,

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